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**Stay The Course Arizona Corporation Commission:
It's Best For Existing & Future Residents**

By Pinal County Supervisor David Snider, Casa Grande Mayor Chuck Walton, Coolidge Mayor Wilbur Wuertz & Florence Mayor Tom Rankin

The local media is to be commended for attempting to explain complex policy issues to readers.

But newspapers like any business are constrained by how much space they can devote to any one issue. When this happens, enormously important facts can be deleted from a story and a reader can be left with an inaccurate or even false impression.

Unfortunately, this happened in Mr. Le Templar's Sunday Tribune article concerning new power lines in Pinal County.

We consider this to be one of the most important issues to our future quality of life, if not the most important. And the Arizona Corporation Commission is set to vote on the location of these large power lines on August 15th.

We want the Commission to respect Pinal County and the three years of work our citizens, property owners and local governments put in, eventually coming up with a compromise plan that was overwhelmingly approved by the Line Siting Committee earlier this year.

Instead of focusing on this landmark compromise and why it makes the most sense for the welfare of Pinal County, Mr. Templar instead focused on one development of a Scottsdale land speculator and how some residents near there are upset by the potential impacts.

Some of us have met Mr. Templar and he seems to be a fine man and a committed journalist. But on this story, and perhaps it was due to space limitations, he left readers with a very faulty impression of the situation.

We need to set the record straight.

- The area and subdivision Mr. Templar disproportionately emphasized has been the "Preferred Alignment" for the new power lines for THREE YEARS. Folks moving into these homes or the developers that sold them these homes knew full well this area was likely to host power lines. In fact, the transcript of the committee hearings reflects that many of the residents in this small subdivision received written disclosures from the homebuilders informing them of the likelihood of the power lines before they even purchased their homes. These homes were built within the last year — these residents knew or should have known that the power lines likely would be placed in this location.

Perhaps Mr. Templar can do a story on the residents of Sun Valley Farms who would be devastated by one of the proposed alternative alignments. These homeowners certainly never got a disclosure when they bought in middle of nowhere some 30 years ago, far from the railroad and power line that currently impacts the "Oasis" subdivision. Better yet, perhaps the Tribune can interview one of the tens of thousands of residents that will already be residing in the heart of Florence if these power lines are built there. Then

maybe Mr. Templar can explain why the power line is in the heart of Florence while there is so much undeveloped land to the west that makes perfect sense for the placement of a power line. So locating this line makes absolutely no sense and unbelievably rewards negligent homeowners and developers at the expense of other parts of Pinal County.

- As the photo accompanying Mr. Templar's story clearly showed, the area in question already has power lines and even an active railroad track. Aligning the new lines where old lines already exist seems a better idea here instead of putting the lines in now unaffected areas.
- Even one of the homebuilders in the "Oasis" subdivision — Centex Homes — testified in SUPPORT of the proposed alignment and continues to defer to the opinions of local leaders like ourselves to the proper location of these lines.
- In approving the current route earlier this year Arizona Corporation Commission staff and the Line Siting Committee provided for a ONE MILE WIDE corridor in order to drastically reduce and in some cases eliminate any impact.
- Alteration of this route, as some Corporation Commissioners have seemed to suggest, would not eliminate impacts it would simply relocate to other Pinal County homes and old neighborhoods. How can this be fair? We simply can't sit by and let a Scottsdale speculator use a little political muscle to enrich himself further at the expense of our communities. Can one imagine what local officials in Phoenix, Scottsdale or Tempe might have done if the Biltmore, downtown Phoenix, Scottsdale Road, Town Lake/Mill Avenue or other economic engines would have become casualties for the sake of a smallish subdivision developed by an out-of-town speculator?
- The proposed route before the Arizona Corporation Commission has not only been endorsed by the Line Siting Committee which reviewed this case for months on the merits rather than the politics, but also by the Coolidge City Council, Casa Grande City Council, Florence Town Council, the Pinal County Alliance and Pinal County Board of Supervisors. Does anyone think that if this route were bad for Pinal County that all of its local leaders wouldn't be the first ones to say so? After all we know the people who would be affected by any of the routes — this makes it tough for us, but we believe that the siting voted by the committee does the least harm to our residents.
- Perhaps more than anyone else the professional staff at the Arizona Corporation Commission has carefully studied this issue, and has endorsed the current route.
- When it comes to numbers Mr. Templar did not provide the whole story. Over 100,000 existing and future residents would be impacted by changing the route on August 15th. A fraction of that amount will be affected if the route stays as is. And while that Scottsdale land speculator's land sits undeveloped with no immediate plans, earth is already being moved in the heart of Florence and thousands of homes are set to going up.
- The article also failed to tell you about the horrible state of the rest of the land along the preferred alignment. It sure seems important to us that you all know that other than the one small subdivision the preferred alignment passes mostly through land that is currently being strip-mined for gravel and such. Most of this route looks like a barren wasteland where mountains are literally getting destroyed and the land is dotted by open pits and piles of debris. The part that is not being strip mined is undeveloped State land

that is going to be vacant and would be unaffected by the presence of power lines. In contrast, the land in the heart of Florence is beautiful with long open views of distant mountains.

- Some have suggested it will be a bit more expensive to have the proposed 100-mile route avoid large population centers. To the contrary, amending the route will prove more expensive for taxpayers because right of way in the heart of communities is going to be a lot more than acquiring it on the outskirts, as the current plan provides.

- Mr. Templar's story insinuated that we are only urging acceptance of the committee's decision because it helps out some developers. We take great offense to this ridiculous claim. Was this claim meant to suggest that depending on the developer we would actually be arguing to have these lines right through the heart of our municipalities? We can assure you that we did not need any encouragement from anyone, developers or otherwise, to know that we did not want power lines going right through the heart of our cities and towns.

If Mr. Templar would have had more space surely these key considerations would have been included. Because it was this information after years of deliberation that led the Arizona Corporation Commission staff, Line Siting Committee, Pinal County officials and the overwhelming number of residents and property owners to agree that the current route is the best one for new power lines.

Now, we hope our five Arizona Corporation Commissioners will respect all of this consensus and hard work. The best quality of life for existing and future Pinal County residents is depending on it.